

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please cancel the previously filed one sheet of drawings.

Please add the One New Sheet of Proposed Drawings attached hereto, as a "REPLACEMENT SHEET".

REMARKS

At the outset, the Applicants wish to thank Patent Examiner Kathryn S. O'Malley and Patent Examiner Cheryl Tyler for the many courtesies extended to the undersigned attorney during the Personal Interview on June 23, 2005, at the U.S.P.T.O. The substance of this Personal Interview is set forth in the Examiner Interview Summary, and in this Amendment.

The amendments to this patent applications are as follows.

Firstly, the objections to the drawings and to the Specification regarding new matter have been resolved. Specifically, the Patent Examiner has stated that the terminology "drying equipment" be changed to "drying oven", and that the term "blocks 3" be replaced by "books 3 with ceramic slabs 4". Also, the term "conveyor" should be changed to "belt conveyor". In addition, a second figure (FIG. 2) should be added to the drawings to show by way of a section view, that the ceramic slabs are beneath and above the books. Therefore, attached herewith is a copy of the proposed Replacement Sheet revising the drawings to show FIG. 1, which is the drying oven and to show FIG. 2, which is a cross-section of the book between the blocks.

The present Specification on page 5 has been amended to include all of these changes to the drawings and to remove the new matter rejection. Withdrawal of this new matter ground of rejection under 35 U.S.C. 132 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to now depend from newly added method claim 9, rather than from cancelled method claim 7.

With regard to the prior art rejection of the claims as being unpatentable over the *Levinson* (U.S. Patent No. 4,103,431), the Applicants comment as follows. During the Personal Interview, the Patent Examiner indicated that the proposed revisions to claims 7 and 8 raised the issue of new matter with regard to "direct microwave irradiation", since the word "direct" does not appear anywhere in the U.S. Specification. Also, the terminology of "extending over a substantial part of the whole surface of the material" is not specifically set forth anywhere in the U.S. Specification and would be new matter. Therefore, the Patent Examiner would not be willing to enter or to allow claims 7 and 8 because of the new matter issues.

During the Personal Interview, proposed new claims 9 and 10 were presented, wherein new claim 9 (method) and new claim 10 (apparatus) each includes the subject matter of claim 6, to

indicate that the ceramic slabs are provided with horizontal grooves and vertical holes. This is in order to increase the moisture absorbing capability of the ceramic slabs. As indicated in the Examiner Interview Summary, this language would overcome the rejection in view of *Levinson* because *Levinson* does not teach horizontal grooves in the ceramic slabs.

Hence, claim 6 has been cancelled.

Therefore, new claims 9 and 10 are being filed, and claims 7 and 8 are being cancelled, as well as cancelling claim 6. This should make the claims patentable in view of the *Levinson* prior art patent applied by the Patent Examiner to reject the claims.

Further reasons for the patentability of the claimed invention are as follows:

Levinson (as the only prior art reference cited against the present application) mentions in the preamble "water soaked books" as one of the articles included in a group comprising bread for poultry stuffing, French fried potatoes, wet clay etc., that are suitable for microwave drying.

It appears from the whole Specification that the same common means are used for all drying articles, i.e., "a heating enclosure 8" (FIG. 1, column 2, lines 34 to 65) constructed so that it will permit a build up of vapor pressure in its pressure chamber (9). "The enclosure may be made of a brittle, vapor and water impermeable material as glass" (column 2, line 43, 45;), "a semi-rigid porous material as fiber paper or open pore polyurethane plastic foam" (also column 4, lines 36-55).

Alternatively, the heating enclosure 33 (FIG. 3) as a part of a device for drying a wet pipe before firing is made of a water-porous, non-glossy, heat-insulating firebrick (column 6, lines 61-63). In this example, the pipe 30 is closed at both ends by fired ceramic plates 31, 32 to partially impede the free release of hot vapor out of the otherwise open ends of pipe 30. Accordingly, the ceramic plates serves as vapor release impede means in a form of two plugs that comes into contact with the pipe only at its narrow annual end surfaces.

On the other hand, the function of ceramic slabs according to the instant application is to improve the drying capacity and homogeneity of the microwave field and thus to eliminate overheating by creating potential hot spots and to provide for the uniform course of the drying process and thus to accelerate

it (the instant Specification - page 3). This is achieved according to the invention in that the substantial part of the drying material surface is covered by ceramic slabs.

Accordingly, the arrangement with ceramic slabs extending over the substantial part of the book or paper material surface is specifically advantageous for drying books and paper material by application of direct heating and without the necessity to use a heating enclosure (8,33).

Although *Levinson* mentions in column 3, lines 58-62 a conveyor belt, he does not expressly disclose a continuous drying method. *Levinson* expressly teaches that "many articles can be dried simultaneously in a single enclosure or a series of enclosures used to dry a series of articles on a microwave oven conveyor belt".

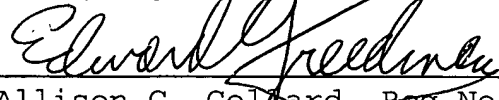
All examples and drawings show a batch, non-continuous drying process which leads to the conclusion that said belt may be used only for the transport of articles in and out of the heating chamber 5 and not to move the articles through the oven during the process of drying. Moreover, the process taught by *Levinson* is always directed to the use of an enclosure contrary to the process according to the claimed invention where the use of

ceramic slabs covering most of the book or paper surface enables direct heating. This is without the necessity of using any additional enclosures for the books and papers in an easy controlled continuous process.

For all the reasons set forth above, the present invention and all the claims are firmly believed to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103 over all the prior art applied by the Patent Examiner. Withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

In summary, claims 2 and 3 have been amended, claims 5 to 8 have been cancelled, and new claims 9 and 10 have been added. In view of these amendments, a prompt Notification of Allowability is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: 1. One Replacement Sheet of Drawings
2. Copy of Petition of 1 Month Extension of Time

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on July 22, 2005.


Ingrid Mittendorf